



THE BALTIMORE–WASHINGTON, D.C., AREA RECENTLY HOSTED THREE CONFERENCES FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS—TESOL, THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF APPLIED LINGUISTS (AAAL), AND THE GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY ROUNDTABLE ON LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS. More than 8,000 language teachers, administrators, and materials writers assembled in these neighboring cities over a 12-day period to share current ideas and plot new courses.

LIKE A
CONFERENCE
BETWEEN
TWO
COVERS

At the TESOL convention, by far the largest of the three gatherings, participants were not only able to exchange views with those in attendance, they could also engage in live satellite communications with colleagues in other corners of the world. Plenary talks, colloquia, workshops, poster shows, and informal discussion sessions gave the participants the opportunity to extend and develop their expertise in their chosen profession. At any one hour during the conference, teachers could sit in on presentations concerning cooperative learning, teaching English in a crowd, the four skills, grammar, testing, educational technology—an endless list. In fact one of the greatest frustrations of attending conferences of this sort is deciding which sessions to attend. But invariably, participants leave the conference with a sense of accomplishment having been exposed to new approaches or having had current practices reaffirmed.

In a way the *Forum* is like any of these three conferences. Between the two covers of the magazine, a breadth of topics is covered as broad as that offered at a professional conference. But unlike the conference-goer, a reader does not have to make a decision about what papers to skip; it is possible to read them all.

In the spirit of a professional conference, this issue focuses broadly upon the field of TEFL. And for those classroom teachers who have 50-plus students facing them, we have featured two articles on teaching large classes. Like TESOL and the AAAL, this issue also puts the spotlight on the star-spangled city of Baltimore: its local heroes, its world-class colleges and universities,

its fine museums, its beautiful inner harbor, and its internationally famous aquarium.

Thirteenth largest city in the United States with nearly three quarters of a million inhabitants, Baltimore has figured prominently in the history of the nation. Established in 1729 and named in honor of Charles Calvert, the fifth Lord Baltimore, whose family founded and controlled the British colony of Maryland, the city became a trade center for the tobacco farmers of the region. With one of the largest natural harbors in the world, Baltimore grew as a commercial center and served briefly as a national capital during the most trying days of the American Revolution. It was in Baltimore's harbor that Francis Scott Key, inspired at seeing the American flag still flying after a battle with British troops during the War of 1812, wrote the words to "The Star Spangled Banner," the national anthem of the United States. The National Road, begun in 1811, opened new markets in the West for Baltimore; and in 1830, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad became a major conveyer of passengers and cargo to the American frontier.

Today Baltimore is one of the best examples of urban renewal in the United States. The inner city and harbor have been transformed from an area of old warehouses, factories, and slums to a vibrant center complete with new office buildings, residential condominiums, a new sports stadium, museums, restaurants, and theaters. Witness to the interplay of natural and human forces, Baltimore reminds us that past errors of judgement can be corrected to provide a better environment for life.

In this vein, we look hopefully to the future as the world gains a better understanding of the delicate balance that exists between human beings and their environment. The winners of the *Forum* environmental drawing are announced in this issue and we display some of the artwork that accompanied a number of the entries.

—TJK

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Clown Fish, Coral Sea, Australia
Carl Roessler, 1989
FPG International

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